

plurality of housing openings (10a) extending from the front side to the back side of the housing member. Each of the housing openings has a sufficient cross-sectional area to allow a fluid medium (F) and particulates (P) to pass. A filter member (20) is disposed adjacent to the housing member. The filter member comprises a porous solid through which fluid medium can pass. The filter member is adapted to adhere to the particulates. A template member (30) is disposed adjacent to the filter member. The template member comprises a solid material that is substantially impervious to the fluid medium. The template member (30) has a front side and a back side and a template opening pattern (50). The template opening pattern comprises an opening in the template member that extends from the front side to the back side of the template member.

Independent claim 9 recites an end of service life indicator comprising a housing member (10) having a front side and a back side. The housing member is constructed of a solid material and has a plurality of housing openings (10a) extending from the front side to the back side of the housing member. Each of the housing openings are of sufficient cross-sectional area to allow a fluid medium (F) and particulates (P) to pass. A filter member (20) is disposed adjacent to the housing member. The filter member comprises a porous solid through which the fluid medium can pass. The filter member is adapted to adhere to the particulates. A template member (30) is disposed adjacent to the filter member and comprised of a solid material. The solid material is substantially impervious to the fluid medium. The template member (30) has a

front side and a back side and a template opening pattern (50) comprised of an opening in the template member extending from the front side to the back side of the template member. A humidifier (21) is permanently adhered to a surface of the filter member (20). A primary filtering system (200) has a primary filter medium (201). An attachment means (70) attaches the housing member (10), filter member (20) and template member (30) to the primary filter medium (201) of a primary filtering system (200). The template opening pattern (50) is in the form of alphabetic letters. The housing member is constructed of a transparent or translucent material, such that the front side of the filter member is visible from the front side of the housing member. The front side of the filter member has a first color, and the first color is darker than a color of the particulate.

It is respectfully submitted that the cited prior art reference fails to teach at least a template member having a template opening pattern as recited in both independent claims.

Kubokawa discloses a filter having a change indicator that includes an air impervious patch secured thereto. "The indicator patch is adapted to impede the air flow through the filter media and divert the air stream so that contaminants are progressively accumulated in the filter media from the periphery towards the center of the air impervious indicator patch as an indication of use of the air filter." See Col. 2, lines 31-36. "When the airflow encounters the relatively small area covered by patch 32, the airflow is diverted about the patch adjacent uncovered portions of the filter media. As the diverted airflow travels about the periphery 40 of the patch, there is a zone 42 of relatively low pressure (compared to ambient pressure in the air stream)

created by this "shadowing" effect adjacent the second major surface 36 of the patch and second major surface 16 of the filter media. This low-pressure zone 42 tends to divert the airflow adjacent the periphery 40 of patch 32 towards the low-pressure zone indicated generally at the center 44 of the second major surface 34 of the patch. Over time, contaminants 46 from the diverted airflow also accumulate in the portion of the filter media 12 covered by the patch. This process of accumulation progresses from the periphery 40 of the patch inwardly towards the portion adjacent center 44 of the patch. The remainder of the filter media accumulates contaminants at a relatively uniform rate of all portions exposed to the air stream." See Col. 6, lines 29-47, as well as Figures 6-8 and accompanying discussions.

From these descriptions, it is clear that patch 32 is not analogous to the claimed template having template openings of the present invention. Thus, the cited prior art does not teach all of the claimed elements of the present invention. As such, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection of the pending claims as being unpatentable and submit that the reference neither teaches nor suggests all of the claimed features of the present invention. Applicants therefore respectfully request that all of the pending claims be found allowable, and this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not currently in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact by telephone, the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

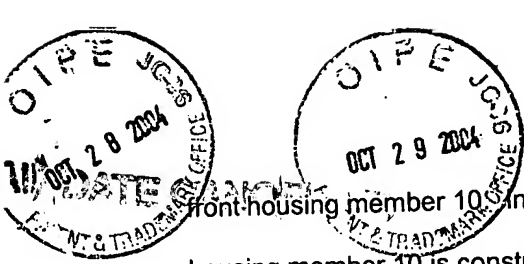
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Goldizen', written over the printed name.

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front-housing member 10. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, the front housing member 10 is constructed of a material such as polyester or nylon, but it may alternatively be constructed of other materials having the characteristics described herein above. It will be understood that, by manufacturing the front housing member 10 from a transparent or translucent material, it is possible to see behind the housing member 10 when looking from a position in front of the housing member 10.

For purposes of simplifying the explanation of the present invention, as used herein, the terms "front", "back", "behind" and the like, refer to the operational orientation of the subject elements as would be seen by an observer facing the direction of fluid medium F flow, as indicated by arrow 101.

The fluid medium F containing particulate matter P passes member 10, preferably made by screen (woven or non-woven) of transparent or translucent inert material (polyester, nylon, etc.) with openings greater than the size of the average particulate matter passing there through. After passing member 10, the fluid flow passes through member 20. The color of filter member 20 preferably has a high color density contrast with respect to that of the expected particulate matter.

In operation, as the fluid medium F flows through the front housing member 10 and the filter member 20, particulate matter P becomes captured by, and accumulates on, the filter member 20.

It is a common misunderstanding that as particulates buildup on filtering media, that the media color always goes from light to dark. In actuality,